

Serial No.: 09/683,417
Attorney Docket No.: F-428

Patent

REMARKS

Claims 26, 27 and 34-39 were currently pending in the Application. Applicant has amended claims 26, 34 and 38-39 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant has added new claims 40-42 directed to elected Group III. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the above amendments and consideration of the enclosed remarks. Applicant submits that no new matter is added. Accordingly, claims 26, 27 and 34-42 will remain pending in the application.

Claim Rejections

In section 3, the Examiner rejected claims 26, 34, 38 and 39 under 35 U.S.C. section 103(a) as allegedly rendered obvious by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0020978A1 to Webb in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,673,914 to Lee.

In response, Applicant traverses the rejection. However, Applicant has amended claims 26 and 34 without prejudice or disclaimer and solely to expedite prosecution. Accordingly, the rejection is moot.

Furthermore, Applicant submits that the cited references do not teach or fairly suggest at least:

"a keyed start switch for receiving a physical key that is engaged and thereby used to send a decontamination start signal to the decontamination system and to restrict decontamination start signal generation to the mail carrier possessing the physical key."

Initially, there is no motivation to combine Lee with Webb. They are non-analogous art. Also, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, push buttons are not taught as interchangeable replacements with physical keys | Lee. In Lee, the push button may be used because access control has been achieved with a code. Therefore, in direct contradiction to the Examiner's assertion, Lee teaches that the push button can replace the physical key only when a security code is obtained by another system to replace the access control functions of the physical key.

Serial No.: 09/683,417
Attorney Docket No.: F-428

Patent

One of skill in the art would not look to Lee to modify Webb. One of skill in the art would know that a push button could not provide access control as a physical key can.

Regarding claims 38-39, the cited references do not fairly teach or suggest a divider material that is at least partially transparent to UV radiation. There is no such teaching or suggestion and in the system of Webb, the divider would cause a "shadow" to be cast by the UV light and thereby not bathe those blocked sections of mail with UV radiation.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

In section 7, the Examiner rejected claims 27 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. section 103(a) as allegedly rendered obvious by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0020978A1 to Webb in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,673,914 to Lee and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,997,374 to Stradley, et al.

In response, Applicant traverses the rejection. However, Applicant has amended claims 26 and 34 without prejudice or disclaimer and solely to expedite prosecution. Accordingly, the rejection is moot.

Applicant submits that the claims are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons described above. Furthermore, the cited references do not teach or suggest communicating to the recipient of the mail. Additionally, the cited means 108 of Stradley, et al. do not appear supported by the provisional applications.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

Serial No.: 09/683,417
Attorney Docket No.: F-428

Patent

In section 9, the Examiner rejected claim 35 under 35 U.S.C. section 103(a) as allegedly rendered obvious by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0020978A1 to Webb in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,673,914 to Lee and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,646,270 to Cunningham.

In response, Applicant traverses the rejection. However, Applicant has amended claim 26 without prejudice or disclaimer and solely to expedite prosecution. Accordingly, the rejection is moot.

Applicant submits that the claims are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons described above. Furthermore, if the Examiner maintains the rejection despite the arguments above, Applicant intends to provide evidence of earlier conception to antedate the Cunningham reference.

Applicant respectfully submits that the present claims are patentable over the cited prior art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

NEW CLAIMS

Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 40-41 are patentable over the cited art for at least the same reasons.

With regard to new claim 42, the claim recites divider material that is at least partially transparent to UV radiation and thus distinguishes over the cited art as described above.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 26-27 and 34-42 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION OF REMARKS

For at least the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that the remaining claims of this application are in condition for allowance and early and favorable action thereon is requested.

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Serial No.: 09/683,417
Attorney Docket No.: F-428

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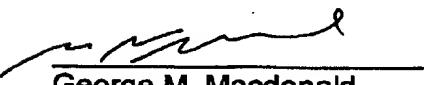
If the Examiner believes that additional issues may be resolved by a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicant at (203) 924-3180.

AUTHORIZATION

No fee is believed due with this response. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for the response or credit any overpayment to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-428.

In the event that an extension of time or additional extension of time is required to make this response timely filed, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time that is required to make this response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-428.

Respectfully submitted,


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